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# INVESTIGATION OF STUDY HABITS OF HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Teaching pupils how to study is one of the pressing problems of teaching. A very little observation of students at work shows that they are working, in many cases, to little advantage, and by "rule-of-thumb" methods. What is needed is some "scientific management" as a result of which we could give students the best methods of work. Could we instal efficient methods of study, we could no doubt lessen materially our percentage of failure and elimination from school. The investigation given herewith was undertaken with the idea of finding out some facts in regard to the habits and methods of study of high-school students. It was thought that if our teachers knew more concretely how their pupils were studying, they would be able to use this knowledge in bringing about better methods of study. It must be admitted, of course, that teachers are somewhat at sea themselves as to the best method of study. They, too, have done their studying by an intuitive method, and they are not able to make it objective for the use of others. It is evident, then, that much work is needed before we can help students effectively.

This investigation is open, of course, to the criticism of the questionnaire method. One must make allowance for the subjective nature of the answers and for questions of mere opinion. For instance, in question 12, students may have been influenced by the question to give the desired answer. However, even here it is evident that about one-eighth of the students have no idea of study except the attempt to absorb bodily the whole subject. Indeed, it has been the experience of the writer in working with students who fail, that a great many of them try to remember everything in the lesson regardless of value or relative importance. Again in question 8, as to the length of time spent on the lessons, the answers undoubtedly allow more rather than less than the time

usually spent. If one may assume, however, that all statements are increased proportionately, it is evident that certain lessons take much more time than others.

Some brief comments will serve to show the points of the study. For instance, the first question shows that 25 per cent of the students have no definite time for study. Almost 50 per cent have no separate room for study. The value of the work done in such conditions is open to question. Again, 75 per cent state that they use evenings for study. This, in itself, would be an argument against mid-week entertainments.

Question 4 aims to find out whether any particular type of lesson was studied at home. In general it would seem that the student takes his hardest lessons home. It is interesting to note also that the students, in a ratio of two to one, prefer to study at school as compared to studying at home. This would indicate probably that better study conditions are obtained at school.

In questions 5 and 6 we had in mind to find out whether any large percentage of students were depending upon other students, parents, or teachers for outside help. The figures show that in the first year outsiders help somewhat, but that such help decreases until the senior year, when the students are working practically on their own responsibility. The same thing is evident in regard to getting help from teachers. This might be explained from the fact that those who need help have been eliminated from the high-school course.

In question 8 the average spent on the subjects by the various years are interesting. The figures are nearly equal for all years except the second. Here a noticeable difference exists in the general average. It is in this year that so many students are eliminated from school. It would be interesting to know if there was any connection between these two facts.

Question 9 may need a word of explanation. It is purposed in this question to find out whether the pupils use any means of recitation with their study. It is well known, of course, that recitation thus used greatly helps retention and permanency of the matter studied.<sup>1</sup> The answers show that a large proportion of the students are using some means of recitation for fixing the material

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Abbott, *Psychological Review*, Monograph Supplement, 1909.

in mind, but it is equally evident that from 15 to 20 per cent apparently have no particular method of study. It is for these students that our study helps are needed.

### STATISTICS OF STUDY BY YEARS. 1913

Based on: Fourth year, 26; third year, 68; second year, 85; first year, 79.

1. a) Do you have each day a definite time for study at home?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	24	59	56	56	195
No.....	2	9	29	24	64

b) When is it?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Morning.....	1	6	2	6	15
Afternoon.....	0	2	3	8	13
Evening.....	23	57	55	56	191

2. Do you have a separate room for study?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	16	36	44	33	129
No.....	10	33	41	43	127

3. a) Do you study in a room where other people are talking?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	7	36	47	30	120
No.....	8	30	37	40	115
Sometimes.....	9	0	0	7	16

b) Does this bother you?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	14	36	22	19	91
No.....	10	24	49	48	131

4. a) Are these your hardest lessons or your easiest?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Hardest.....	23	45	56	55	179
Easiest.....	2	19	10	14	45
Medium.....	0	5	19	3	27

b) Would you rather study at home or at school?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Home . . . . .	9	19	24	24	76
School . . . . .	12	43	54	52	161
No choice . . . . .	5	7	7	3	22

5. Do you, as a rule, study with someone else?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes . . . . .	1	3	7	10	21
No . . . . .	25	64	78	68	235

6. a) Do you get help in studying your lessons?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes . . . . .	0	17	17	29	63
No . . . . .	25	51	64	50	190

b) From parents?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes . . . . .	0	9	9	19	37
No . . . . .	0	51	70	48	169

c) From friends?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes . . . . .	0	12	8	7	27
No . . . . .	0	46	68	55	169

d) Do you get help from your teachers?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes . . . . .	13	40	56	66	175
No . . . . .	12	22	23	8	65

e) How often?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Often . . . . .	0	0	17	23	40
Very seldom . . . . .	11	38	36	28	113

7. How long do you study at a time?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Thirty minutes or less..	10	20	28	26	84
One hour.....	6	31	32	34	103
Longer than 1 hour.....	10	14	19	19	62

8. How long, on an average, do you spend on a lesson in the subjects you are carrying? Give name of study and time in space below.

FOURTH YEAR			THIRD YEAR		
Subject	No.	Average	Subject	No.	Average
English.....	23	37.1 min.	English.....	64	40.4 min.
Chemistry.....	19	51	German.....	48	39.5
History.....	18	46.6	History.....	51	40.7
Domestic Science..	5	25	Physics.....	25	44.2
German.....	15	43.6	Commercial		
Agriculture.....	3	30	Geography....	3	26.6
Review Mathe-			Chemistry.....	11	47.7
matics.....	1	45	Agriculture....	5	40
Economics.....	5	33	Geometry.....	7	36.4
Physics.....	1	45	Cooking.....	7	27.1
Business English..	1	30	Latin.....	11	39
			Economics.....	7	41.4
			Stenography....	1	35
General average..		38.6 min.	General average..		38.2 min.

SECOND YEAR			FIRST YEAR		
Subject	No.	Average	Subject	No.	Average
German.....	55	39.1 min.	Arithmetic.....	19	37.8 min.
Geometry.....	43	51.7	Algebra.....	57	39.7
History.....	55	50.5	English.....	64	36.6
English.....	7	40.9	Latin.....	29	43.6
Sewing.....	2	37	Physiology.....	36	48.4
Agriculture.....	13	43.4	Science.....	10	27
Algebra.....	10	32	Bookkeeping....	6	47.5
Latin.....	39	44.6	Cooking.....	5	43
Commercial			Sewing.....	2	37
Geography....	11	36.3			
Arithmetic.....	11	30			
Business English..	13	38			
Physics.....	2	37			
Stenography.....	4	37.5			
Cooking.....	6	25.8			
General average..		31.7 min.	General average..		40 min.

g. a) How do you study? Do you write out notes on your lessons?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	15	30	35	33	113
No.....	10	39	51	39	139

b) Do you write out translations?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	1	16	50	24	91
No.....	25	53	37	38	153

c) Do you outline your lessons?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	13	35	47	23	118
No.....	12	31	37	49	129

d) Do you underscore the most important points in the text?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	21	63	58	50	192
No.....	4	6	27	23	60

e) Do you read your lessons out loud?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	7	18	24	22	71
No.....	19	48	62	52	181

f) Do you say your lessons to someone?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	3	10	13	17	43
No.....	23	57	69	54	203

g) Do you close your book and repeat your lesson to yourself?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	17	44	51	64	177
No.....	8	25	33	12	78

*h)* Do you use any other plan?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	4	9	21	15	49
No.....	4	59	62	47	168

10. Which of these things do you find most helpful?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
<i>a)</i> Writing notes.....	3	3	6	7	19
<i>b)</i> Writing translations..	0	0	1	0	1
<i>c)</i> Outlining.....	6	11	21	3	41
<i>d)</i> Underscoring.....	10	10	9	2	31
<i>e)</i> Reading aloud.....	1	3	1	2	7
<i>f)</i> Reciting to someone..	1	1	5	1	8
<i>g)</i> Closing book.....	5	21	18	19	63
<i>h)</i> Other plan.....	0	7	13	6	26

11. Do you review earlier lessons when not asked to do so by the teacher?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes*.....	21	45	43	45	154
No.....	4	22	41	19	86

\* Usually just before a test.

12. In studying history, science, English literature, etc., do you try to pick out the most important points in a lesson and master them?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	24	53	68	63	208
No.....	1	8	17	11	37

Or do you try to remember everything in the lesson?

	Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year	
Yes.....	1	8	17	11	37
No.....	24	53	68	63	208